

YOU HAVE THE POWER

YHTP.ORG



Green Flags

A resource guide on healthy
relationships

Our Mission: To empower those victimized by violent crime through
education, advocacy, and understanding.

You Have the Power ... Know How to Use It, Inc.

Created January 2022

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Green Flags:

Understanding Healthy Relationships

The purpose of this resource guide is to:



- Explore the elements that make a healthy relationship



- Discuss the characteristics of healthy relationships and building healthy relationships



- Provide recommendations for resources in building and maintaining healthy relationships

Often people think of healthy relationships from the perspective of dating partners or sexual partners. However, healthy relationships extend beyond romantic partners to include friendships, family, and business relationships. Few people would willingly enter into a relationship they knew would eventually turn abusive. Knowing what to look for in healthy relationships can save you or someone you know from a lot of stress, turmoil, and pain.

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“A healthy relationship doesn’t drag you down. It inspires you to be better.”
- Mandy Hale

Message from Our Founder

You Have the Power...Know How to Use It, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1995 in Nashville with a mission of advocacy, support, and empowerment for those victimized by crime. Collaboration with other community organizations is integral to our work, and we're honored to work with many organizations and advocates across Tennessee.

You Have the Power provides information in the form of resource guides, presentations and documentaries on issues such as child sexual abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, bullying, elder abuse and human trafficking. In addition, we conduct Victim Impact classes for incarcerated offenders. Our presentations typically include original video documentaries of crime survivors and Criminal Justice System professionals sharing their experiences.

The resource guide *Green Lights: Healthy Relationships* addresses the issue of healthy relationships. For more information on this topic or about our organization, please contact us at 615-292-7027 or our website at www.yhtp.org.

Sincerely,



Andrea Conte
Founder, You Have the Power

Definitions

bystander

one who is present but not taking part in a situation or event

healthy

beneficial to one's physical, mental, or emotional state: conducive to or associated with good health or reduced risk

intervention

the act of interfering with the outcome or course especially of a condition or process

relationship

the way in which two or more people, groups, countries, etc., talk to, behave toward, and deal with each other

resolution

the act or process of resolving

unhealthy

a: risky, unsound
b: of a harmful nature
c: morally contaminated

Facts About Healthy Relationships

People in healthy long-term relationships are

50%

less likely to die prematurely.

⁷Robyn Brickel, M.A., LMFT

People in healthy, committed relationships
PRODUCE LESS CORTISOL,
the hormone linked to stress.

⁸Northwestern Medicine

Being in a healthy relationship can contribute to someone having

HEALTHIER BEHAVIORS AND GREATER SENSE OF PURPOSE.

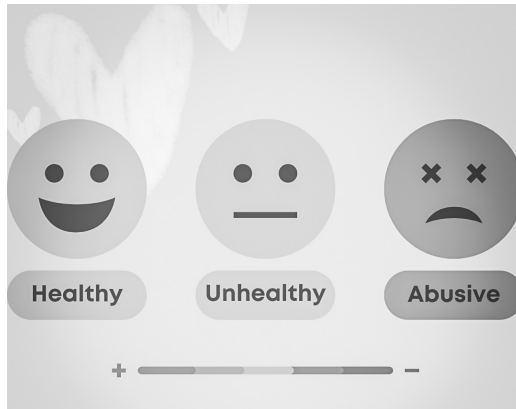
⁸Northwestern Medicine

Healthy relationships provide a feeling of safety and security that contribute to lowering anxiety levels and

REGULATING BLOOD PRESSURE.

⁸Office of Public Affairs

Relationship Spectrum



Relationships exist along a continuum, ranging from healthy and loving to abusive and destructive. And some relationships are unhealthy, with a mix of healthy and abusive characteristics. Depending on the circumstances, they could transition to healthy or abusive.

In deciding where a relationship falls on the continuum, we look at these aspects within it. Are these elements present, and how are they expressed?

Communication
Respect
Honesty and trust
Fairness and equality
Individuality
Safety
Support
Acceptance

Some “deal breakers” and red flags, like physical harm or threats to kill, are obvious. But some elements depend on the

relationship and present themselves differently. We must always consider the context, intent, and effect of these elements when determining where a relationship falls on the continuum.

In a healthy relationship, both partners

- listen to each other, talk openly about problems and concerns without fear
- respect each other's opinions and feelings, honoring boundaries
- believe each other is telling the truth
- make decisions together, with partners able to make their own choices
- value each other as they are

as we'll learn more about in the following pages.



Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship

As previously mentioned, all relationships consist of eight characteristics or elements.

Communication
Respect
Honesty and trust
Fairness and equality
Individuality
Safety
Support
Acceptance

The type of relationship between participants can be determined by the signs of each characteristic.

Communication

In healthy relationships, communication will be open and honest. One or both participants in the relationship will not feel intimidated when communicating. Participants will listen to and respect each other when communicating and sharing their thoughts and/or feelings.

Respect

Participants, in a healthy relationship, will give “due regard (value) for the feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions”¹⁰ of each other. This includes respecting their boundaries and personal space as well.

Honesty and Trust

Each participant in the relationship can be open and truthful with the other without feeling unsafe or under scrutiny. Being honest with each other does not mean that participants have to share everything. Some experiences, thoughts, or feelings may remain private. Additionally, participants believe what the other shares without requiring proof, justification, or verification.

Fairness and Equality

Each participant is held to the same standards in the relationship. Decisions are made together and the relationship is “impartial and just treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination”¹¹ exists within the relationship.

Individuality

Each participant in the relationship supports the other and is comfortable continuing other relationships, spending time doing things they love, doesn't feel pressured to change who they are, and doesn't feel like they have to compromise their boundaries or who they are.

Safety

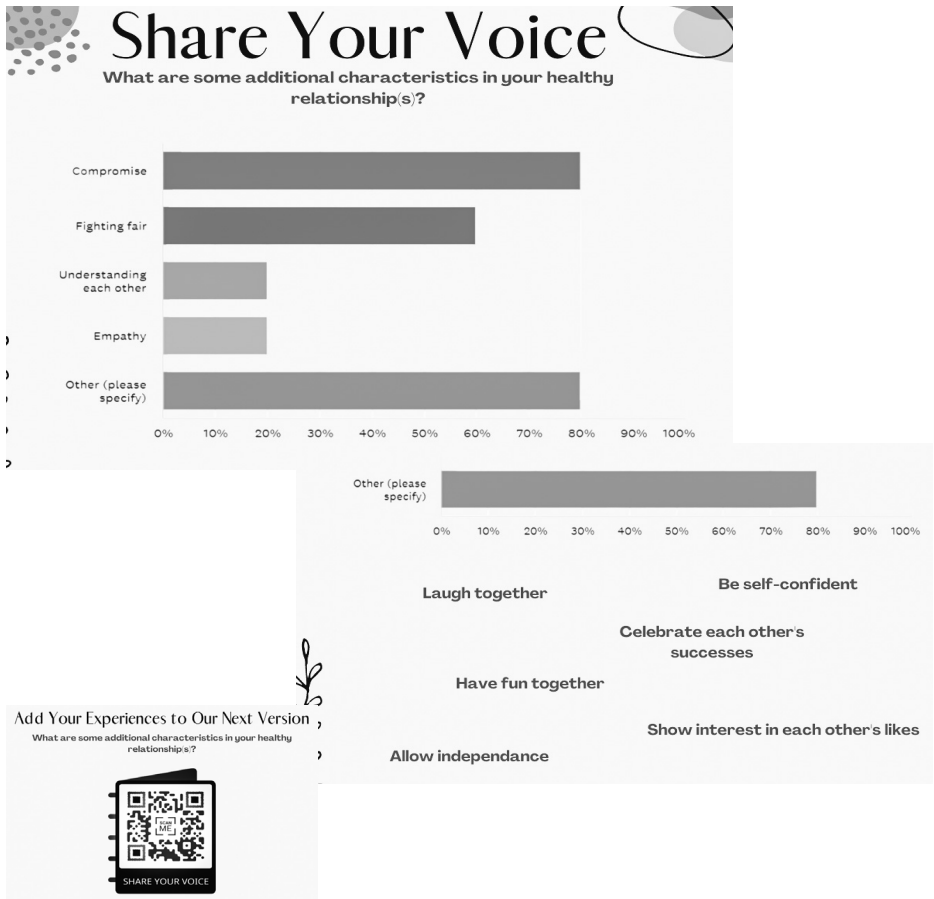
Both participants feel secure in the relationship and do not have a fear of physical, emotional, or mental harm from the other.

Support

Both participants consistently listen to each other, provide constructive feedback, are compassionate towards the other when one is struggling, and celebrate successes with each other.

Acceptance

Neither partner feels like they have to change who they are or what they say to be valued or loved by the other.



Signs of a Healthy Relationship (“Green Flags”)

You’ve probably heard about “red flags” in a relationship—behaviors that suggest a partner is or may become abusive. But how do you know if your partner is a safe person who will treat you with respect? If there are “red flags” that serve as warning signs, surely there must be “green flags” too. “Green flags” are how someone acts out the characteristics of a healthy relationship.

While you can never be entirely sure your partner will never hurt you, we’ve created a list of “green flags” sourced from a variety of counselors, advocates, and survivors.

Keep in mind that a romantic partner may display plenty of “green flags” up front and “red flags” may not show up until later in the relationship. In abusive relationships, this is known as the “Honeymoon” phase. Also, remember no one is perfect and your partner may not match every item on this list. Finally, if your partner doesn’t have any of these “green flags”, that might be a “red flag” of its own.

- They respect the word “no” and your personal boundaries.
- They accept your opinions and feelings as valid without instantly challenging them.
- They act the same way in public as they do when they’re in private.
- They accept and get along with your friends and family, and they want to introduce you to theirs.

- ↪ Their actions match their words.
- ↪ You can have an argument without them becoming insulting or wildly angry.
- ↪ They demonstrate respectful, honest, and open communications with you and other people.
- ↪ They have outside interests besides you, and let you pursue your own.
- ↪ They let you work and interact with other people without becoming overly jealous.
- ↪ When they do something that upsets you, they genuinely apologize and try to do better.
- ↪ When you make a mistake, they accept your apology without blowing up at you or holding grudges.
- ↪ They admit it when you know more than they do on certain subjects.
- ↪ They don't tell you how to dress, talk, or act around other people.
- ↪ They celebrate your achievements and console you after your losses.
- ↪ They are quick to give credit and slow to place blame.
- ↪ You feel like they genuinely care about you and how you're doing/feeling.
- ↪ They allow you to be in a bad mood or upset about something.

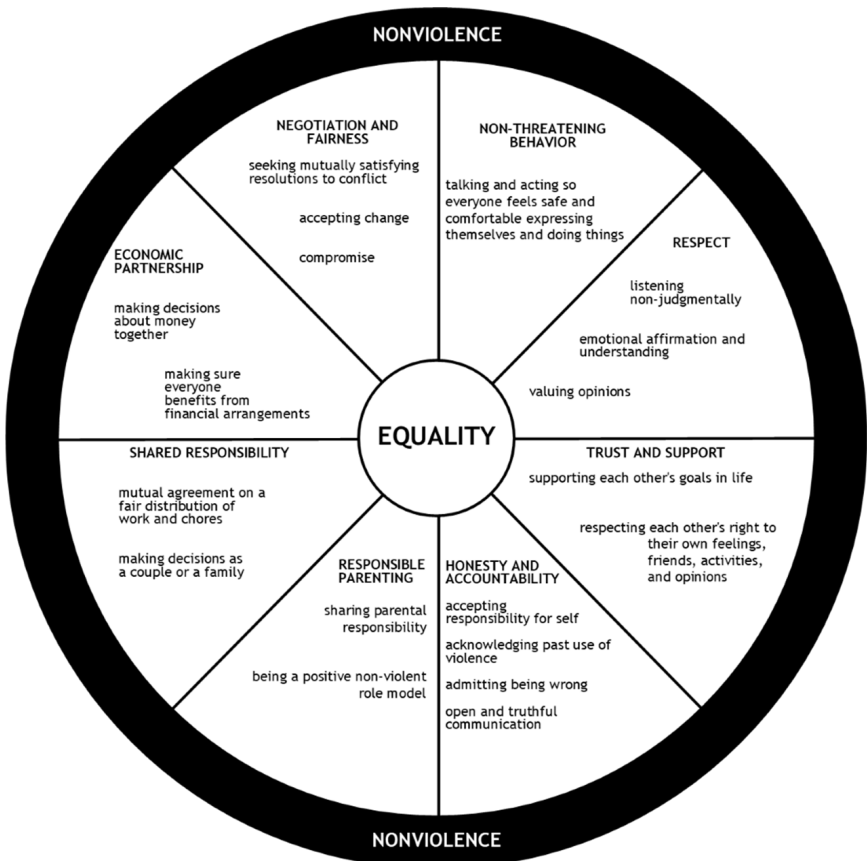
- ↪ They have good relationships with their ex-partners. You can be yourself around them.
- ↪ You find yourself smiling and laughing when you're around them.
- ↪ You share common values--things that are important to you are important to them as well.
- ↪ They empower you and make you feel like you can be a better person, and they are open to your encouragement to become better themselves.
- ↪ They can compromise on things—not everything has to go their way.
- ↪ They allow themselves to be vulnerable around you.
- ↪ They believe your time is valuable, following through on pre-arranged plans and meetings.
- ↪ They can take constructive criticism.
- ↪ They express anger in an appropriate manner, not becoming disproportionately enraged or taking out their frustrations at other people or situations on you.

The preceding list was adapted from the following sources: Gussie Bryan, Citation 14; DomesticShelters.org, Citation 15; Allie Hayes, Citation 16; Relationship Institute, Citation 17; Brittany Wong, Citation 18

Equality Wheel

You may have heard of the Power and Control Wheel and its variations. The Power and Control Wheel is used by domestic violence activists across the world to show the different behaviors that together form a pattern of violence.

In contrast, the Equality Wheel shows a relationship based on equality and non-violence. It's also helpful in setting goals and boundaries in relationships.



Consent

Consent is when one person agrees to do something or gives permission to have something happen to them.

Consent means both parties understand and agree to the act.

Consent is not given if:

- One party threatens the other.
- One party forces the other.
- One party exerts the power of their position or rank to coerce the other.
- The victim is unconscious.

Just because people are in a relationship or married does not mean they necessarily consent to every physical act.

What does consent look like?

Consent is freely given, without using force or intimidation.

Consent is coherent, given by someone who is sober and completely awake.

Consent is clear, with no ambiguity that all parties involved are willing and eager participants.

Consent is reversible, with the people involved being able to change or stop if they want to, anytime they want.

Consent is conditional and specific.

The preceding section was adapted from Erika Smith, Citation 12

Consent and Romantic Relationships

In romantic relationships, the conditional and specific nature of consent includes when, where, and how physical intimacy and sex happens.¹²

Additionally, it includes the decision whether to use contraception--condoms, birth control pills, etc.-- and not removing or sabotaging them. It also covers sexting and nude photos... i.e., not pressuring someone to send nudes, not forwarding them to other people, not sending unwanted nudes, etc.¹²

CONSENT
IT'S SIMPLE AS TEA



Screen capture from Blue Seat Studios. "Tea Consent (Clean)." YouTube video, 2:49. May 13, 2015. <https://youtu.be/fGoWLWS4-kU>. Copyright ©2015 Emmeline May and Blue Seat Studios.

This video is well-regarded for its concise metaphorical description of sexual consent in the face of questions like:

- Can an intoxicated person consent?
- What if someone consented before?
- What if the person consents and then changes their mind during the romantic encounter?

An acronym used by Planned Parenthood and many other service providers to teach and remember consent is F.R.I.E.S.

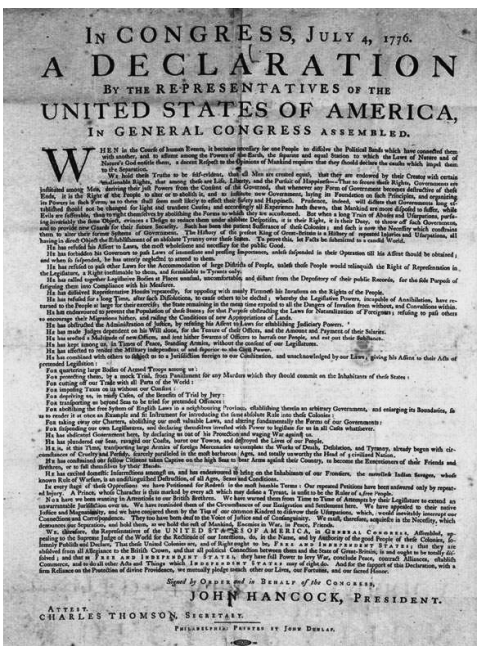


For more information about consent in relation to sexual encounters, check out [You Too, You Have the Power's](#) resource guide on sexual assault and harassment.

Consent Outside Romantic Relationships

While we often think of consent in the context of romantic relationships, consent is a part of our every day lives. Some examples are:

- When your family member or friend asks if it's okay to give you a hug.
- When a parent/guardian signs a permission slip for their child to go on a field trip or watch a movie in class.
- When you ask to borrow your friend's book, movie, or piece of clothing you liked.
- When you agree to a prospective employer conducting a background check.



A well-known document, the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, provides an example of consent outside romantic relationships. It states, “..Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the **consent** of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends...”

Practicing Consent

Recognizing consent and practicing consent are two different aspects. Often we teach what consent is and how to recognize if someone is consenting, but we don't teach about how to practice obtaining consent. Here are some ways you can practice consent:

Request Input Before Required Activities

If you expect others to attend and participate in an upcoming event (birthday party, office holiday party, happy hour, game night with friends, etc.), ask for their input in the planning stages.

Ask Permission Before Sharing Others' Stories or Information

People choose who they share information about themselves with. A friend, family member, or co-worker may share information with you that they wouldn't share or wouldn't feel comfortable sharing with others. Ask permission from them before sharing personal information they shared with you or telling their story to someone else.

Ask Permission Before Touching

Not all forms of touch are romantic or sexual in nature. We should still obtain consent before touching another person. This includes hugging, putting your arm around someone, touching their shoulder, or holding their hand. Obtaining consent before touching includes family members. Often children will be told to hug a relative as a greeting or to say goodbye, however hugging someone should be a choice they consent to and are comfortable with.

Ask Permission Before Taking a Picture

Allow others the option to consent to having their picture taken. Some people may not be comfortable appearing in images for privacy reasons, personal reasons, or safety reasons.

Ask Permission Before Posting Pictures or Videos

Not everyone participates in social media and not everyone wants their image shared with the public or other people they don't know. Allow others to decide if a photo or video of them is shared on social media and how (private or public).

Make Room for the Person to Refuse

Giving the person an opportunity to not consent to something is practicing consent in a way. Don't manipulate or pressure the person into accepting a gift you've purchased them or an invitation you've extended to them. Provide the opportunity for the person to disengage or refuse to discuss something if they're uncomfortable. By making room for the person to refuse or not consent, you are showing that you respect their right to consent.

The preceding section was adapted from Suzannah Weiss, Citation 19

“

Silence isn't golden and it surely
doesn't mean consent, so start
practicing the art of **communication**.

T.D. Jakes

Personal Boundaries

Boundaries in relationships are limits that help you to protect yourself and practice self-care. Boundaries are healthy and contribute to healthy relationships because they help to keep you mentally and emotionally all right. A lack of boundaries can contribute to poor emotional and mental health.²⁰

Boundaries can vary. They may depend on a person's culture and experiences. Additionally, a person's boundaries will vary based on the type of relationship (partner, friend, family, co-worker, etc.).

There are three types of boundaries with different characteristics.

- **Rigid** boundaries - A person may distance themselves from others sharing little information about themselves and avoid relationships of an intimate or close nature.
- **Open** boundaries - A person may overshare information with others and seek to have an intimate or close relationship with everyone.
- **Healthy** boundaries - Healthy boundaries often fall in-between the previous two. They will depend on the type of relationship (as previously mentioned) and sometimes on the situation. Healthy boundaries are clearly communicated.

Boundaries can address different areas of a person's life. They can be applied in different situations: at work, at home, or with friends. Boundaries in specific areas a person's life may change depending on the situation they are applied to.

Areas that boundaries address include:

- **Physical** - Physical boundaries set limits regarding your personal space, body, and public affection.
- **Sexual** - Sexual boundaries set limits regarding intimacy, sexual comments, and sexual touching.
- **Intellectual** - Intellectual boundaries set limits regarding what you think and believe.
- **Emotional** - Emotional boundaries set limits regarding your feelings.
- **Financial** - Financial boundaries set limits regarding your finances.

The preceding lists were adapted from Chantelle Pattemore, Citation 21

As we have discovered, boundaries are important and used in all areas of our life. So, how do you set boundaries?

- Practice **self-awareness** by knowing what you are comfortable with and what makes you uncomfortable.
- **Communicate** your boundaries with others so they know what your comfortable with and when they've overstepped.
- Remain **consistent** in enforcing your boundaries so there is no confusion about your expectations. If you're concerned about consistently enforcing your boundaries, start with something easy and small. Just like any new habit, setting and enforcing personal boundaries can take time to develop.

Share Your Voice

I know my boundaries and consistently communicate them.

I'm ready to start!

Yeah!

Yes! I know them and am working on consistent communication.

One thing I learned about consent is...

All relationships

It's reversible

F.R.I.E.S

Includes relationships/married people

The first is sexual relationships

Add Your Experiences to Our Next Version

I know my boundaries and consistently communicate them.

One thing I learned about consent is...



What Healthy Relationships Aren't

Healthy relationships don't consist of hurtful or threatening communication. People within the relationship don't mistreat each other and aren't abusive verbally, mentally, physically, or emotionally.

In intimate partner relationships, there is no attempt to control each other. Both people in the relationship are equal and one person does not try to have power over the other person or force the other partner into sexual acts.

To learn more about unhealthy and abusive relationships, “red flags”, how to support someone in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, and what resources are available,

Request or Download
You Have the Power's
“When Violence Hits
Home” Resource Guide

The cover features a balance scale tilted to the right. The left pan is labeled "WITHOUT" and the right pan is labeled "YOU HAVE THE POWER". Below the scale is a black triangle.

When Violence Hits Home

A resource guide on domestic violence for survivors, friends, and the community

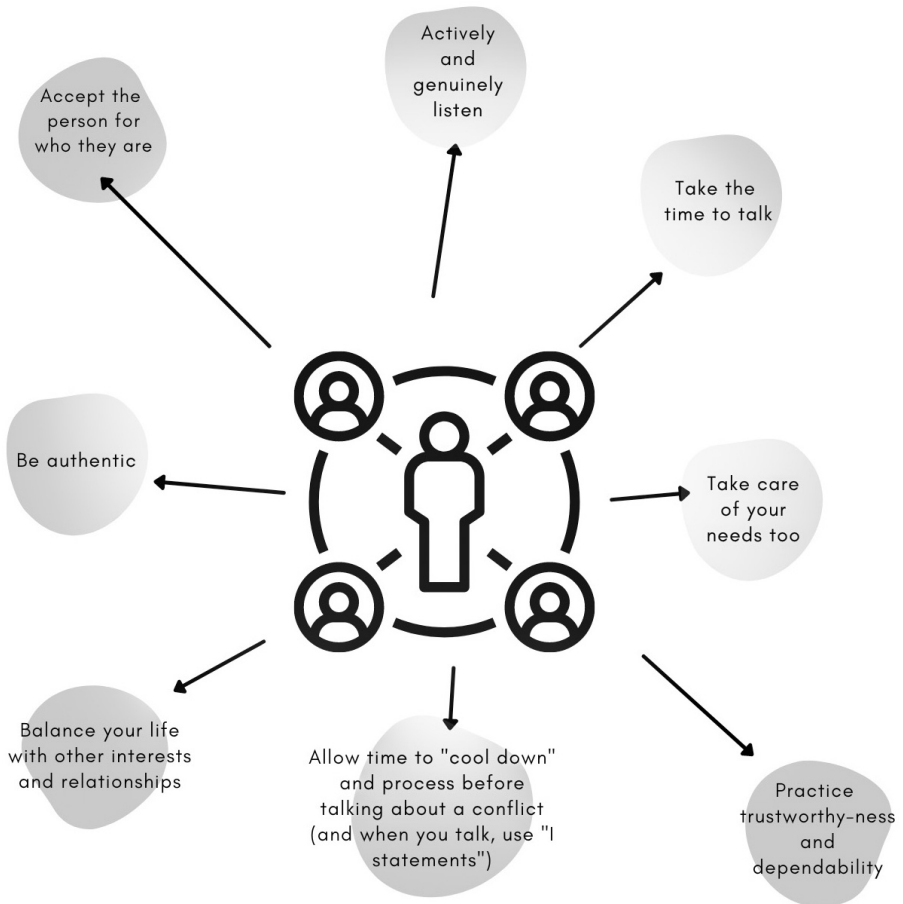
Our Mission: To empower those victimized by violent crime through education, advocacy, and understanding.

You Have the Power ... Know How to Use It, Inc.

Last updated June 2020

Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Building and maintaining a healthy relationship takes time and work. But, knowing where and how to start can make all the difference. Here are 8 tips for building and maintaining healthy relationships.



Tips were adapted from Amherst College, Citation 22

Conflict Resolution

Conflict will occur within relationships. And, conflict can be healthy for relationships because it means people are communicating, expressing their needs, and sharing their thoughts and feelings openly.

Conflict resolution is the process used in the relationship to peacefully discuss and settle the conflict. Instead of yelling at each other, not talking about the conflict, or belittling the other, the people within the relationship work together to solve the conflict in a respectful way.

A good way to practice conflict resolution in a relationship is to remember S.A.F.E.

Stay calm.

1. Use calming strategies to stay cool and collected.

Ask questions.

1. Ask honest and open-ended questions to better understand the situation.
2. Don't jump to conclusions.
3. After listening to answers, you may realize that the conflict was all a misunderstanding.

Find out feelings.

1. Find out how the other person feels about the situation that is causing the disagreement.
2. Express your own feelings-be honest and specific, referring to the situation and what about it upsets you.
3. Use "I" statements when expressing your feelings (I feel _____ when you _____).

Exchange ideas for a possible solution.

1. With all of this information, suggest possible solutions.
2. Talk about which ones work best for the two of you.

Figure Above from Utah Department of Health, *Healthy Relationships Toolkit*,
Citation 23

Share Your Voice

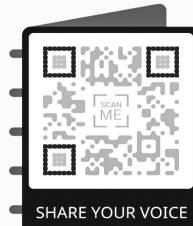
What conflict resolution skills help you?

Apologize
Watch body language
maintain a calm tone
Pay attention to nonverbal cues
Apologize and forgive
Take responsibility for my part
Talk to the person directly, not behind their back
Try not to take anything personally



Add Your Experiences to Our Next Version

What conflict resolution skills help you?



Bystander Intervention

A bystander is a someone who sees something happening and has the chance to prevent it--in this case, conflict within an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

You might not feel comfortable getting involved, especially if you don't know the would-be victim or perpetrator. But what if the person at risk was a friend or a loved one? You'd want someone to step up.

The first step to becoming a bystander is to pay attention to your surroundings. Watch for unwanted touching, hostile or demeaning language, or someone getting extremely intoxicated after one drink or in a short amount of time. Get a second opinion if you think something doesn't look right but aren't sure.

Once you know you need to step in, figure out how. Use the **5 Ds** to intervene.

Distract!

Spill your drink, or bring out fresh snacks. Ask one of the people involved for the time. Pull up something funny on your phone, or ask to borrow someone else's. Suggest leaving to go somewhere else. Start a dance-off. Do anything you can think of to interrupt the situation peacefully so that the person at risk can get to safety.

Delay!

Check with the person you think needs help. Do they feel safe? Help them figure out how to get to a safe location or at least get away from the person or people bothering them.

Are they losing consciousness, unable to speak or breathe, or stumbling when they walk? They might need medical attention. Don't be afraid to call 911 if you think they need it.

Delegate!

If you don't feel confident intervening on your own, get someone to help you. Ask someone who knows the person at risk to come with you, or tell them what's going on. Talk to the person hosting the party, a co-worker, the person at the front desk, or a security guard. Anyone who is around who can help. Once one person begins to help and reach out for assistance, others will join in.

be Direct!

Using this tactic is best when you know the person who is causing the problem. This is because you have already established a relationship (hopefully, healthy relationship) in which you can speak with them openly and truthfully. If you think you can do so safely, you speak directly to the person causing the problem. Call them out: tell them what they're doing is not okay. You might be able to make them leave, by telling them to leave or go cool off. Again, you should try this **only if it won't put you in danger**. Ideally, you should try one of the other Ds before resorting to this one.

Document!

If you have your phone or some other device on you, record the incident from a safe distance. Include details like street signs or posters that help identify the location, and clearly state the date and time.

(This tactic should only be used if someone else is intervening. If not, you should use one of the other D's.)

Once the would-be victim is safe, make sure to ***ask them what they want you to do with the footage. Don't post it or use it without their permission.*** You don't want to embarrass or traumatize the person further by putting the incident online without their permission.

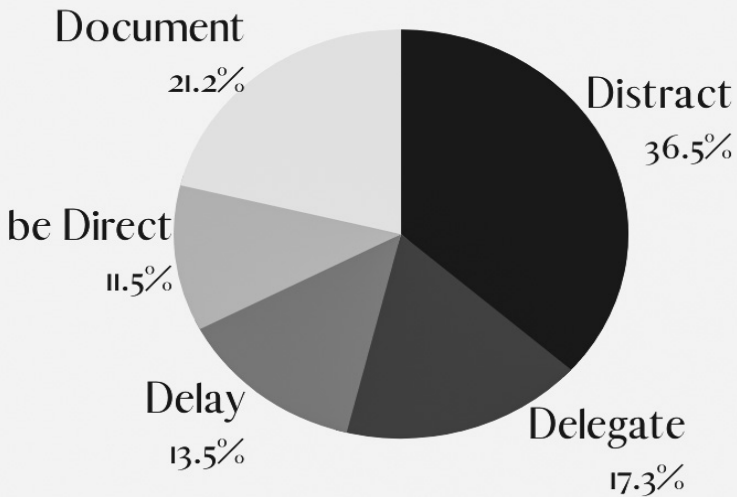


You may need to use more than one of the D's at once. For example, you can **delegate** someone to call 911 while you are being **direct** with the person causing the problem. Or you can **document** while **distracting** by setting your car alarm off.

Again, do you whatever you have to do and whatever you can do, safely. It's better to spend a few minutes in an awkward encounter or conversation than for the confrontation to become dangerous or for someone to get hurt.

Share Your Voice

Which active bystander tactic(s) is the easiest for you to use? (Choose all that apply)



Add Your Experiences to Our Next Version
Which active bystander tactic(s) is easiest for you to use?



Resources and Information

The following section provide information on websites that provide education on healthy relationships, the relationship spectrum, conflict resolution, and recognizing green and red flags. Keep in mind that websites may update or change their material. In response to this, You Have the Power updates our resource guides regularly. If you find a resource below that has changed, please let us know (see pg. 34).



Positive Psychology

How to Set Healthy Boundaries

<https://positivepsychology.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/>

Love is Respect

“love is more than just the way you feel”

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/>



National Domestic Violence Hotline

Healthy Relationships

<https://www.thehotline.org/resources/healthy-relationships/>

Bloom365

“Safe and healthy relationships for all.”

<https://www.bloom365.org/>



For information on domestic violence services and shelters, please review our When Violence Hits Home Resource Guide (see pg. 24).

Suggested Reading

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen

It Didn't Start with You: How Inherited Family Trauma Shapes Who We Are and How to End the Cycle, by Mark Wolynn

That's Not What I Meant!: How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Relationships, by Deborah Tannen

The Five Keys to Mindful Communication: Using Deep Listening and Mindful Speech to Strengthen Relationships, Heal Conflicts, and Accomplish Your Goals, by Susan Gillis Chapman

The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts, by Gary Chapman

The Highly Sensitive Person: Understanding and Managing Relationships When the World Overwhelms You, by Elaine N. Aron

The Seven Secrets to Healthy, Happy Relationships, by Don Miguel Ruiz, Jr. and HeatherAsh Amara

Share Your Voice

Let us know if we missed a topic related to healthy relationships that you'd like to learn more about.

Let us know your thoughts about this resource guide and how we can make it better.

Your feedback is important to us.



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